Seattle
Office of Housing

Memo

Date: December 6th, 2022

To: Office of Housing 2022 Multifamily NOFA Advisory Committee

From: Maiko Winkler-Chin, Director
Laurie Olson, Capital Investments Director

Subject: Africatown Community Land Trust - Keiro

The Africatown Community Land Trust (ACLT) is requesting $17,276,765 in permanent financing to develop Keiro in the Central District neighborhood of Seattle. ACLT plans to construct a 4-building complex that is made up of a 5-story, 6-story, 7-story, and an 8-story building that will consist of 238 units and a commercial space that is designated for an early childhood learning center. The proposed unit mix consists of 46 - studio, 170 - one bedroom, and 22 - two bedroom units and will be for individuals and families earning up to 60% of area median income; less than 10% of these units are proposed to be family-sized units.

Located on 16th and Yesler, Keiro will replace the existing building that was formally occupied by the Keiro Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and is currently being operated as a homeless shelter. The site is adjacent to the Langston Hughes Center for the Performing Arts and Wisteria Park and down the street from Douglass-Truth Library. The site sits on a major bus line that goes directly into Downtown as well as walking distance to the Seattle Streetcar for access into the International District, First Hill, and Capitol Hill.

Given the historical significance of this site, community engagement, involvement, and approval will be a must throughout the design process. ACLT has held three community meetings. Two meetings to address community needs and one meeting to reveal the architectural design. From these meetings, ACLT highlighted the need for health care services, celebrating history of community members, communal spaces for gathering, education, and building community, integration of art, common area incorporating nature and water features, space for black businesses, high quality design, family sized units, honoring history, and architecturally fit in with the character of the neighborhood.

The Office of Housing is not recommending this project in 2022 for the following reasons:

In the 2022 fall round, the Office of Housing does not have sufficient resources to consider all requests. The current ACLT request to OH is $17.3million. A request of this magnitude is difficult to consider in such a resource limited, highly competitive, funding round.

The current scope of this project consists of 4 buildings which may lead to not only inefficiencies in construction but also maintenance, energy usage, and functionality throughout the life of these buildings. There is also a question on who the target populations are for this project. Additional time will allow ACLT to work on their design that is responsive to the communities needs as well as efficient for both construction and operations.

In the application, Keiro is modeling $19 million from the State Housing Trust Fund. This is well above the per project limit of $5 million and $10 million per sponsor limit. Additional time will allow ACLT to secure additional financing and identify a development partner.